

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An exposure control apparatus which determines an exposure value based on the luminance of a photographic screen and performs exposure control based on the determined exposure value, said exposure control apparatus comprising:
- an area generating unit which divides the photographic screen into a predetermined number of areas;
 - a deciding unit which decides, for each area generated by said area generating unit, whether a main subject having
 - 10 a high luminance exists within that area;
 - an average luminance calculating unit which calculates an average luminance in the area generated by the area generating unit according to the decision result by said deciding unit; and
 - 15 an exposure value determining unit which determines an exposure value based on the average luminance in the area calculated by said average luminance calculating unit.
2. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 1,
- 20 wherein said deciding unit counts pixels, each having a luminance higher than a predetermined luminance threshold, out of pixels forming the area and decides whether the count value of the high luminance pixels exceeds a predetermined count threshold; and
- 25 said average luminance calculating unit calculates

the average luminance by using the luminance per se of the high luminance pixel when the deciding unit decides that the high luminance pixel count value exceeds the predetermined count threshold; in contrast, said average
5 luminance calculating unit substitutes a predetermined low luminance smaller than the predetermined luminance threshold for the luminance of the high luminance pixel so as to calculate the average luminance when the deciding unit decides that the high luminance pixel count value is equal
10 to or smaller than the predetermined count threshold.

3. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a parameter table which stores therein a plurality of parameter groups, each of which includes the
15 luminance threshold, the count threshold and the low luminance,

wherein said deciding unit and said average luminance calculating unit select the parameter group according to an exposure condition.

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4. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the parameter group per area generated by said area generating unit is stored in the parameter table, and said deciding unit and said average luminance calculating unit
25 select the parameter group according to the area generated

by said area generating unit.

5. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of low luminances in the parameter groups, and said average luminance calculating unit selects the low luminance according to the high luminance pixel count value.

6. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of low luminances in the parameter groups, and said average luminance calculating unit selects the low luminance according to the high luminance pixel count value.

7. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of count thresholds in the parameter groups, and said deciding unit selects the count value according to the exposure condition.

8. The exposure control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said parameter table stores the plurality of count thresholds in the parameter groups, and said deciding unit selects the count value according to the exposure condition.

9. An exposure control apparatus comprising:

an area generating unit which divides a screen into
a predetermined number of areas;

a deciding unit which decides in which area of the
5 screen a subject having a high luminance is included;

an average luminance calculating unit which calculates
an average luminance in that area of the screen which said
deciding unit decides as including the subject; and

an exposure value determining unit which determines
10 an exposure based on the average luminance calculated by
said average luminance calculating unit.

10. An exposure control method which determines an
exposure value based on the luminance of a photographic
15 screen and performs exposure control based on the determined
exposure value, said exposure control apparatus comprising:

an area generating step which divides the photographic
screen into a predetermined number of areas;

a deciding step which decides, for each area generated
20 by said area generating step, whether a main subject having
a high luminance exists within that area;

an average luminance calculating step which calculates
an average luminance in the area generated by the area
generating step according to the decision result by said
25 deciding step; and

an exposure value determining step which determines an exposure value based on the average luminance in the area calculated by said average luminance calculating step.

5 11. The exposure control method according to claim 10,
wherein said deciding step counts pixels, each having a
luminance higher than a predetermined luminance threshold,
out of pixels forming the area and decides whether the count
value of the high luminance pixels exceeds a predetermined
10 count threshold; and

said average luminance calculating step calculates
the average luminance by using the luminance per se of the
high luminance pixel when the deciding step decides that
the high luminance pixel count value exceeds the
15 predetermined count threshold; in contrast, said average
luminance calculating step substitutes a predetermined low
luminance smaller than the predetermined luminance
threshold for the luminance of the high luminance pixel so
as to calculate the average luminance when the deciding step
20 decides that the high luminance pixel count value is equal
to or smaller than the predetermined count threshold.